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## Fort Irwin dedicates building to its first fallen Iraq vet

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FORT IRWIN -- Fort Irwin officials dedicated a new headquarters building Saturday morning to the first soldier from the installation to die in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The building, Robsky Hall, was named after Staff Sgt. Joseph E. Robsky Jr., an Army explosives expert who was killed in Baghdad exactly two years ago while dismantling a bomb.

Robsky's unit -- the 759th Ordnance Company, Explosive Ordnance Disposal, a bomb squad of 21 soldiers -- will use the building as its headquarters, said Capt. Scott Barlow, the commanding officer for the company.

Robsky's parents, Bonnie Robsky and Joseph E. Robsky Sr., traveled from Elizaville, N.Y., to attend the 10 a.m. ceremony Saturday morning.

Robsky Hall is "99 percent done," Barlow said, and should be ready for his soldiers next week.



Photo contributed

Joseph E. Robsky Sr. and his wife Bonnie (center) attend a Fort Irwin dedication ceremony Saturday morning in which officials named a building after their son, Staff Sgt. Joseph E. Robsky Jr., who was killed in Baghdad two years ago.

The 759th is currently responsible for defusing bombs and unexploded munitions all over southern California and parts of Nevada. Barlow said his soldiers won't have much time to get comfortable in the their new headquarters; the unit is expected to deploy in October for Afghanistan. This would be the unit's first overseas deployment since Dec. 2002, when the soldiers were sent to the Persian Gulf.

Robsky, killed at age 31, was a career military man who joined the Marines fresh out of high school. He was first based in Okinawa, Japan, where he served as "a combat metal worker," Barlow said. Robsky finished his stint in the Marines at Camp Pendleton in Oct. 1994, and spent an additional year and a half in the Marine Reserves.

Robsky enlisted in the Army as an infantryman in 1997. He was deployed to Bosnia, where he saw children killed and maimed by landmines and unexploded ordnance. This experiences led Robsky to become a bomb expert. He served with the 759th for nearly three years.

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